NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Collegial Study Groups

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Collegial Study Groups

1 **Establish a regular meeting time**
- ◆ Schedule frequent meetings for shorter time periods
- ◆ No more than two weeks apart
- ◆ One hour minimum – Two hour maximum
- ◆ Focus is ALWAYS on improving instruction and student learning

2 **Establish Study Group Norms and Roles**

NORMS
- ◆ Study groups must set ground rules (norms)
- ◆ Norms help clarify what is expected from all study group members

ROLES
- ◆ Team members must share the responsibility of the study group
- ◆ Roles may be rotated among team members

3 **Develop an Action Plan for the Study Group**
- ◆ Each study group should have its own action plan
- ◆ Action plans help drive and direct the study group

4 **Tips for Success and Focus on Instruction**
- ◆ Not just a new name for a new team
- ◆ Don't get lost in administrative issues
- ◆ Focus on CURRICULUM and INSTRUCTION

5 **Begin Meetings**
- ◆ Rotate leadership
- ◆ Document each meeting
- ◆ Encourage all study group members to maintain personal logs
- ◆ Set goals for each meeting

6 **Monitor Effectiveness**
- ◆ Continually evaluate the effectiveness and progress of the study group
- ◆ Look for evidence that…
  - ◇ Teachers are working together to deliver a coherent curriculum
  - ◇ Teaching practices have improved
  - ◇ Student achievement has increased

Step 2: Study Group Roles

- Study group team members share the responsibility for the effectiveness and productivity of meetings.
- Teams assign and rotate roles among the members.

Facilitator – The facilitator confirms the times and location for the meetings, gathers materials, facilitates discussion, maintains focus, ensures participation by all and ends the meetings.

Name(s)

_____

_____

Recorder – The recorder takes notes and completes a log of the meeting. The notes and log should be distributed to all group members.

Name(s)

_____

_____

Timekeeper – The time keeper starts and ends the meetings on time and helps to maintain focus by reminding the study group of time left to complete tasks or wrap up discussion.

Name(s)

_____

_____

Researcher – The researcher provides resources for topics under discussion and locates information that is requested during the study group meetings.

Name(s)

_____

_____

Step 2: Study Group Norms

- Study groups must set ground rules (norms).
- Norms help clarify what is expected from everyone and how team members are expected to interact.
- Norms are revisited as needed.

Please list the norms (rules) you would like to see in your study group

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Sample Norms

- Meetings start and end on time.
- Everyone is expected to participate.
- Roles will rotate among study group members.
- Everyone has an equal voice.
- Opinions are respected.
- There are no putdowns of self or others.
- Everyone is responsible to complete assignments.
- Everyone is responsible for staying focused on the topic.

Step 3: Developing an Action Plan

- The study group begins by collecting and reviewing data and information to determine the greatest area of need.

- The study group then narrows their topic to address specific student needs that are being exhibited.

> **Example.** If the area of greatest need is reading. The study group must determine what specifically in reading are the students struggling with.

- If multiple study teams are developed, each study team develops its own action plan.

- The action plan helps to drive and direct the study group's efforts.

An Action Plan Should Contain…

- The topic under study

- Specific areas of need

- What the team will research and study to address the area of need

- The intended result of the study group

> **Action Plan Examples.**
> - ➔ Reading professional literature
> - ➔ Discussing and reflecting on possible applications for students
> - ➔ Researching, studying and teaching to standards
> - ➔ Selecting activities and strategies to try in the classroom
> - ➔ Gathering and examining student work
> - ➔ Discussing teaching activities that were successful and those that were not successful and why
> - ➔ Participating in additional training
> - ➔ Evaluating what works
> - ➔ Setting new priorities and expectations

Step 3: Study Group Action Plan

Subject Under Study.

_____

Specific Area(s) of Need.

_____

_____

Actions the teachers will take during study group meetings.
What the group will actually do during the study groups meetings?

Consider using action verbs listed below

- Practice
- Collect
- Train

- Demonstrate
- Construct
- Model

- Explore
- Critique
- Share

- Investigate
- Design
- Read

- Share
- Role play
- Examine

_____

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Intended results of the study group.

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_____

How will these results be determined?

_____

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_____

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Step 3: Study Group Action Plan

Subject Under Study.

Reading

Specific Area(s) of Need.

We have identified two areas that we would like to pursue. These areas include: teaching reading strategies in all content areas and teaching reading comprehension across the curriculum.

Actions the teachers will take during study group meetings.
What the group will actually do during the study groups meetings?

Consider using action verbs listed below

▪ Practice	▪ Demonstrate	▪ Explore	▪ Investigate	▪ Share
▪ Collect	▪ Construct	▪ Critique	▪ Design	▪ Role play
▪ Train	▪ Model	▪ Share	▪ Read	▪ Examine

Through this study group, we will… read professional literature, discuss and reflect on how this applies to our students, select activities and strategies to try in our classroom, discuss what activities were successful and why, gather and examine student work, set new priorities and expectations for all students.

Intended results of the study group.

The intended result of this study group is to increase the effective teaching of reading strategies and reading comprehension in all grade levels and in all subject areas. Another intended result of this study group is for greater collaboration among staff members.

How will these results be determined?

These results will be determined through the examination on NWEA and state assessment reading comprehension scores, reviewing of teacher lessons and teacher observation, review of study group assignments and participation, and district and teacher efforts to make teacher collaboration a priority.

Step 4: Tips for Success and Focus on Instruction

<u>Tips for Success</u>
Study groups…learning communities…learning teams…what ever they may be called, don't just happen because the time is set aside for educators to get together and meet. They must be nurtured and deliberate. They often start with great momentum and excitement, but can lose focus. Below are tips to keep in mind to help your group stay on the right track.

- <u>Find your purpose</u> – Without a purpose, what is the point of meeting? Revisit this frequently.

- <u>Unearth Success</u> – Set tasks that can be accomplished and review the success achieved.

- <u>Goodbye Unhelpful Attitudes</u> – If needed, revisit the norms to ensure that they are followed. Negative attitudes can really drag the team down and hinder success.

- <u>Relax and Experiment</u> – Try new things! We can learn from our failures and successes.

- <u>Produce Your Results</u> – Develop something tangible that shows the progress the team is making (i.e., bulletin board, video, lesson plans, etc.). This helps to validate the purpose and growth of the group.

- <u>Reflect</u> – At the close of each meeting, summarize where you have been and what you accomplished. This should lead into discussion for the next meeting.

- <u>Don't Leave Mad</u> – Although the team does not have to agree on everything, it is important for decisions to be made. So, if a controversial topic is being discussed and the meeting has to come to an end, try to make a decision on it. Even if the decision is not unanimous, decisions should be made and then discussed at the subsequent meeting.

- <u>Rotate Responsibilities</u> – Take turns with the various roles established.

<u>Focus on Instruction</u>
Educators must make a conscious effort to focus on instruction and those practices that are in the school's control when working in study groups. Putting effort and blame on matters outside the school's control is not an effective use of time and will not produce results. Focusing on instruction will help move your group to begin working as a team.

- Don't get lost in administrative issues

- Focus on CURRICULUM and INSTRUCTION

  - Implementing new and effective techniques

  - Providing coherent curriculum

  - Reaching ALL students' needs

  - Monitoring student progress

  - Finding practical ways to improve teaching and learning

Resources:
- Jolly, A. (2008). *Avoid Learning Community Burnout.* Teacher Magazine. Vol. 01, Issue 02, Page 8.
- NSDC Tools. (2005). *Transform you group into a team.* Tools for Schools for a Dynamic Community of Learners and Leaders. Vol. 9, No. 2.

Step 5: Documenting Professional Development

Meeting date: _____

Study Group Members Present:

Research/Literature/Instructional practice under study:
_____

Summary of Last Meeting:

Discussion:

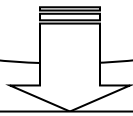| |
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Application(s) to classroom:

Do we need further information to proceed to implementation? (Complete only one side)

❏ Yes

❏ No

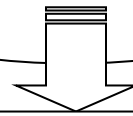**What is our plan to gather more information?**

What is our plan to experiment with implementation?

How will we measure success?

Assignments/What will happen at our next meeting?

Step 6: Monitor Effectiveness

Study groups should monitor their effectiveness throughout the meeting process.

The following questions should be considered when determining effectiveness:

- What evidence is there that teachers are working together to deliver a coherent curriculum?
- What evidence is there that the teaching practices have improved?
- What evidence is there that student achievement has increased?

The following documents have been developed to assist you with gathering the appropriate documentation for evaluating study groups. These documents can be found on the subsequent pages of this guide.

- Beginning Evaluation
- Interim Evaluation
- Final Evaluation

Step 6: Beginning Evaluation
Date: _____

Our study group topic is _____.

What data did we consider when establishing the topic of this study group?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Is there data that still needs to be collected? If so, what?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How does our topic reflect our schoolwide needs?

_____

_____

_____

What are the intended goals and objectives of our study group?

_____

_____

_____

How will our study group document change?

_____

_____

_____

Step 6: Interim Evaluation

Date: _____

What is working well in our study group? Why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What are the challenges the study group is facing?

_____

_____

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_____

What are some solutions for the challenges?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What do we want to continue with our study groups?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What will we change? How will we make this/these change(s)?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Step 6: Final Evaluation
Date: _____

Did we accomplish our goals and objectives?

_____

_____

_____

Can we document change as a result of the study group?

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What recommendations can we make for our school based on the results of the study group?

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_____

Are there further steps we would like to take as a result of this study group?

_____

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